## Patent Claims

1. A jackpot system for the allocation of wins from at least one jackpot to players playing at a plurality of gaming positions, wherein said gaming positions are associated with a computer network including a computing engine having a memory for receiving inputs from the gaming positions and at least one output for communicating information to said players, at least one paytable stored in said memory or in another memory associated with said computer network, said paytable being capable of being configured by an operator and having a plurality of possible winning entries and wins associated with said winning entries, a selection generator which is triggered at least once, via said computer network, by a trigger input generated in response to the playing of each game of a group of selected games, whereby to generate a selection, means for comparing the selection generated with the paytable, and, in the event of the selection generated corresponding to a said winning entry, initiating the transfer of the associated win to at least one player associated with the gaming position which triggered the selection, and/or to another jackpot.

2. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said computing engine is a centralized computing engine.

3. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said computing engine is a distributed computing engine.

4.    A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said paytable includes an input operatable by at least one of an operator or a manufacturer for the inputting of information relating to at least one of the winning entries and wins associated with said winning entries.

5.    A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said inputs from said gaming positions comprise at least one of the following items of information:

- a value related to the amount bet at each game at the gaming position,
- information relating to the time at which each game is played,
- an indication of the identity of the gaming position (slot machines or positions at gaming tables or the gaming table itself),
- information relating to the geographical location of the gaming position,
- information relating to one or more player attributes such as the identity of the player (for example from player card such as to name, age, sex, member of group),
- player activity level (for example frequency of past visits, total turnover, turnover per visit, turnover per player session, time of player session, number of games per session, average bet per game),
- information on the type of game played,
- achievement of a specific win combination at the gaming position,
- information relating to an external event, such as a manual input from an operator or an input from another jackpot or jackpot system,

- information whether the gaming position is in operation,
- information on the number of patrons entering the casino and/or leaving the casino.

5    6.    A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said at least one output comprises at least one of the following:
- an output to one or more jackpot displays,
- an output to one or more multimedia devices (sound, light, television screen, smoke generator),
10    - outputs to displays or indicators (loudspeaker, vibrating seat) associated with one or more of said gaming positions.

   7.    A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said entries in said paytable comprise at least one of the following:
15    - a sequence of consecutive numbers each associated with a respective win or no win or with a plurality of like wins (for example an infinite or finite number of ten dollar payouts, or ten motorcars, or casino complementary),
- a plurality of random numbers each associated with a respective
20    win, or no win, or with a plurality of like wins,
- an indication of how many like wins associated with a winning entry are left (i.e. have not been allocated) if any,
- a plurality of dissimilar wins in a given sequence associated with one winning entry (for example nine small cars and one luxury
25    car).

   8.    A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said wins comprise at least one of the following:
- a fixed sum of money,

- a sum of money related to a jackpot amount (for example via the size of the bet - higher bets usually lead to higher wins),
- a physical prize (for example motorcar, record player, cap, watch),
- a non-physical prize (for example holiday, theater ticket, airline ticket),
- casino complementary.

9. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said selection generator comprises a counter for counting the total number of trigger inputs generated in response to the playing of each game of a group of selected games and used in conjunction with a plurality of random numbers defining said winning entries in the paytable.

10. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said selection generator comprises a random number generator optionally used with a paytable having a sequence of consecutive numbers defining said winning entries or a plurality of random numbers defining said winning entries.

11. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 10, wherein means is provided for varying the probability of a win in response to at least one of the following inputs:
- time of day,
- geographic location of the respective gaming position,
- instantaneous jackpot value,
- amount of bet,
- player attributes,
- player activity level,
- player contribution to the jackpot,

- minimum possible bet amount (denomination, for example one dollar machine or ten dollar machine),
- level of activity in casino (for example slot occupancy, i.e. number of gaming positions in play or number of patrons in the casino),
5
- system generated functions of time and/or location and/or any combination of the above listed inputs,
- predetermined patterns, for example, comprising specific functions of time and/or location and/or jackpot value.

10  12.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said inputs define a dynamic probability matrix controlling said selection generator.

13.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 11, wherein said means
15  for varying the probability of a win comprises means for varying the range of random numbers capable of generation by said selection generator in response to each trigger input.

14.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 13, wherein said means
20  for varying the probability of a win comprises means for varying the associated entry in the dynamic probability matrix, which can be the same or different for all gaming positions.

15.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the transfer of
25  the associated win to a player takes place in accordance with at least one of the following possibilities:
- small wins credited to a gaming position meter (for example at a slot machine),

- small wins paid out immediately at the gaming position (for example at the slot machine or by the croupier or dealer at a gaming table, or by a ticket or voucher printer),

- small wins credited to a cashless card or cashless account in a casino data base (the cashless card and cashless account being associated with the player),

- small wins credited to a player tracking bonus points account associated with the player,

- larger wins by crediting player account at casino bank,

- larger wins in cash at a casino cage,

- major wins (for example car, large cash wins, holiday) by special presentation to a player to maximize publicity effect and enhance player interest,

- major wins by payment to a cashless account at casino or to a cashless card,

- win paid out in accordance with value dependent table.

16. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein the transfer of the associated win takes place to a plurality of players in accordance with at least one of the following schemes:

- a win of a fixed value to a player at a gaming station which triggered the win and a win of a second value or further values (typically smaller) to one or more associated players (for example players at adjacent gaming positions, for example at adjacent slot machines or at the same gaming table),

- a win of a first value to a player at a gaming position which triggered the win and a win of a second value or further values (typically smaller) to other members of a predefined group (for example when a win is triggered at a slot machine, a payout is made

at a selected gaming table (random selection of gaming table or system selection predefined), or payment is made to all other members of a coach trip).

17.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1 and comprising a plurality of jackpots, wherein a proportional payment is made from each bet wagered in one jackpot of a jackpot system into a further jackpot.

18.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said further jackpot comprises at least one of the following:
- a jackpot in a jackpot system configured in accordance with claim 1,
- a further jackpot associated with the same group of selected games,
- a further jackpot associated with a different group of selected games,
- a further jackpot associated with a different casino.

19.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1 and comprising a plurality of jackpots, wherein a win associated with one of said jackpots triggers a payment into a further jackpot.

20.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 19, wherein said further jackpot comprises at least one of the following:
- a jackpot in a jackpot system configured in accordance with claim 1,
- a further jackpot associated with the same group of selected games,

- a further jackpot associated with a different group of selected games,
- a further jackpot associated with a different casino.

5   21.   A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1 and comprising a plurality of jackpots, wherein a win associated with one of said jackpots triggers at least one trigger input in a further jackpot.

    22.   A jackpot system in accordance with claim 21, wherein said further jackpot comprises at least one of the following:

10

- a jackpot in a jackpot system configured in accordance with claim 1,
- a further jackpot associated with the same group of selected games,
- a further jackpot associated with a different group of selected games,

15

- a further jackpot associated with a different casino.

    23.   A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said computing engine comprises at least one jackpot memory for accumulating a record of inputs into said jackpot and for debiting wins from said jackpot when allocated to one or more players.

20

    24.   A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein means are provided for periodically initiating an event affecting at least some of said gaming positions by varying a respective entry in a probability matrix, for example by using system generated functions of time and/or location and/or any combination of the said inputs or predetermined patterns, or, for example by using specific functions of time and/or location and/or jackpot value, the jackpot system fur-

25

30

ther comprising a plurality of items of multimedia apparatus informing the patrons of the impending event and simulating the event, for example the passage of a conceptual tornado through the casino.

5    25.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 24 and means for operating said items of multimedia apparatus to explain to patrons in a casino the cost of the event to the casino, for example representing the amount paid out in response to the event as the damage caused 10    by the event.

26.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 24, wherein said units of multimedia apparatus form a part of said computer network.

15  27.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 24 including means for statistically pre-evaluating or simulating the cost of a said event to the casino.

28.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1 including means for 20    varying the selection criteria in accordance with at least one of operator determined inputs and manufacturer determined inputs.

29.  A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1 and comprising a parallel computer system duplicating or multiplicating said jackpot 25    system in the sense of carrying out in parallel all computer operations of the jackpot system and means for continuously or repeatedly comparing the results of the jackpot system and the parallel computer system(s), and means for indicating a fault in the event of discrepancies or means for taking majority decisions.

30

30. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, wherein said jackpot system is configured as a software program configured for operation using said computer network.

5    31. A jackpot system for the allocation of wins from at least one jackpot to players playing at a plurality of gaming positions, wherein said gaming positions are associated with a computer network including

- a centralized or distributed computing engine having a means for receiving, storing and processing inputs from the gaming positions

10   and at least one output for communicating information to said players,

- at least one parameterizable win determination unit including at least one associated game of chance having rules and parameters relating to the rules and associated wins, said parameters being

15   stored in said storage means, or in another storage means associated with said computer network, said win determination unit being capable of triggering play at said game of chance for each corresponding trigger input either from a unit associated with a gaming position or from a central unit to generate a result and

20   - a comparator for comparing the result generated with the rules of the game, and, in the event of the result generated corresponding to a winning result, initiating the transfer of the associated win to one or more players at or associated with the gaming position which triggered the winning result, and/or to another jackpot.

25   32. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 31, wherein said game operated by said win determination unit has a winning probability.

33. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 32, wherein win determination unit has a setting input by which said winning probability can be statistically set.

5  34. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 32, wherein said win determination unit has a setting input by which said winning probability can be dynamically set.

35. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 31, wherein said win determination unit has a game stored therein having at least one

10  step for producing a result of solution and at least one of a win determination method and a win calculation method for determining whether said result is a win or no win and, in the event of a win, for determining at least one of the value and type of win.

15

36. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 35, wherein said win determination unit uses a paytable.

37. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 36, wherein said paytable is a fixed paytable.

20

38. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 36, wherein said paytable is a parameterizable paytable.

25  39. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 36, wherein said paytable is a dynamically changeable paytable.

40. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 31, wherein said win determination unit has means for the deterministic allocation of wins and at least one input for inputting criteria for the deterministic allocation of wins.

5

41. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 40, wherein said means for the deterministic allocation of wins comprises a counter and a comparator.

10 42. A jackpot system in accordance with claim 41, wherein said comparator is adapted to trigger a hit event.

43 A configurable jackpot system, wherein means are provided for enabling said casino management to determine at least some of the following criteria:

15
- which gaming positions in a casino qualify for incremental entries into a jackpot or said jackpot system,
- which gaming positions qualify for a chance of winning said jackpot,
20
- which players qualify for a chance of winning said jackpot,
- which probability is associated with each chance of winning the jackpot,
- which wins are associated with the jackpot,
- which information relating to the jackpot is displayed to the players,
25
- which multimedia displays or events are associated with the jackpot.

44. A method of operating a jackpot system for the allocation of wins from at least one jackpot to players playing at a plurality of gaming positions, wherein said gaming positions are associated with a computer network including a computing engine having a memory for

5 receiving inputs from the gaming positions, and at least one output for communicating information to said players, the method comprising the steps of:

- providing inputs from each gaming position each time a new bet is wagered,

10 - inputting casino specified criteria depending whether a wagered bet qualifies for one or more chances of winning a win associated with said jackpot,

- setting up a game of chance having a paytable comprising a plurality of winning entries and at least one win associated with at

15 least some of said winning entries,

- defining said wins associated with said winning entries,

- providing a selection generator to generate a selection which may be a winning entry in accordance with a specified probability,

- defining criteria determining a plurality of specified probabilities,

20 - deciding whether each wagered bet specifies said criteria qualifying the wagered bet for a chance of winning a jackpot and, if so, triggering said selection generator to generate a selection with a specified probability of it being a winning entry determined in accordance with said probability criteria,

25 - checking whether the selection generated constitutes a winning entry and

- subsequently allocating a win associated with a winning entry to one or more players in accordance with allocation criteria specified by the casino.

5    45.    A method of testing a jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, comprising the steps of repeatedly testing the communication channels throughout the network to ensure all attached units are functioning correctly, repeatedly triggering self-tests of the attached units and checking the results.

10

46.    A method of testing a jackpot system in accordance with claim 1, comprising means for repeatedly performing program verification steps for all critical programs and repeatedly checking all critical parameters stored within the jackpot system and means for indicating

15    a system fault if the program verification step fails for any such critical program or critical parameter and remedying said fault automatically or by an operator.